



## ***Memorial Middle School***

***District: Joplin R-VIII School District***

***Building Enrollment: 714***

***Grade Range: 6-8***



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### ***A Snapshot of Memorial Middle School...***

Memorial Middle School is located in the heart of Joplin, Missouri. Joplin has a population of just over 45,000 and a rich legacy rooted in the mining industry. Now the fourth largest metropolitan area in the state, Joplin is the gateway to the Ozarks. The stately three-story brick building that is now Memorial Middle School has watched Joplin grow and change for 89 years. It was erected in 1917 as Joplin High School. Since that time, it has been Memorial High School, Joplin Junior High, and now Memorial Middle School. To the right of the marble staircase that leads to the second floor is a brass plaque placed by the students of Joplin Senior High School in 1946. The plaque bears the names of 77 local men who lost their lives in World War II. An inscription reads: "In memory of our valiant brothers who gave their lives for their country in World War II, 'They are not dead, but locked in the hearts of those who loved them'." Countless relatives of those listed on the plaque continue to pass through the doors of Memorial Middle School even today. The school has witnessed many changes and improvements over the years. A new gymnasium was added in 1968, air conditioning was added in recent years, and modern wireless computers have helped bring the building into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Memorial Middle School is one of three middle schools in the Joplin R-VIII School District. The school is home to nearly 720 outstanding students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades and 82 incredible staff members who strive every day to enrich the lives of each student.

*Memorial Middle School's Mission: "...to offer each student the skills necessary to develop academically, socially, and emotionally so that they can be successful in an ever-changing and complex society."*

### ***Innovation is the Key...***

As the staff and students at Memorial Middle School celebrate their achievements, they realize the road to success is a dynamic one. What works for one student in one situation might not work for the next. The school's informal motto is, "If we can't find a way, we will make one." Innovation is the key to student success at Memorial Middle School. The majority of students at Memorial come from disadvantaged, low socioeconomic backgrounds. Fifty-three percent of Memorial's students receive free or reduced-price meals. This means that, in many cases, students and staff must work together to overcome the effects of poverty in order to achieve success. Teachers at Memorial are committed to improving their own knowledge and seeking innovative, research-based strategies to meet the needs of all students.

***"Teachers understand their commitment to professional development is crucial to their success, as well as the success of all students."***

Targeted book studies, including Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works*, Beers' *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do*, Mendler's *Discipline with Dignity*, and Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, help teachers develop a deeper understanding of their students' social, intellectual and physiological challenges and offer new approaches to instruction. Other professional development opportunities through workshops, conferences, and classes are tailored to address the specific needs of Memorial's student population, as well.

### ***Strength through Partnerships...***

The faculty, staff and administration at Memorial Middle School work to bring the community into the school in order to understand the needs of each student and to work together to accomplish the goal of reaching each child at his or her own level. Memorial Middle School serves as a hub not only for the neighboring community, but also for the Joplin community as a whole. All three of the city's middle schools and numerous community organizations use the gymnasium. Memorial Middle School opens its doors to the elementary all-city vocal group and all-city orchestra so that they may have adequate space and facilities in which to practice. Twice a year, Memorial hosts the eighth grade dance for all three middle schools. By opening its doors to the community, Memorial Middle School has fostered a strong partnership that nurtures students' achievement and self-esteem.

***"It is through the collaborative efforts of school and community that the Memorial family has found success. We continue to strengthen the partnership and develop methods to grow a better community."***

Because Memorial Middle School plays such a vital role in the community's day-to-day activities, parents are comfortable in the school environment and are actively involved in their children's education. The process of building strong parent/school partnerships begins early in the year when parents attend the school's annual open house kick-off event. Throughout the year, parents are present during special classroom activities where students display work and discuss what they have learned. Parents also help with community service activities and are invited to attend and help supervise school trips. To facilitate ongoing communication, teachers enter grades and attendance into Parent Connect, an Internet site where parents can securely enter and access their child's file to check their progress. A phone dialer system calls every parent who has a phone to inform them about events at school. Memorial Middle School offers parents and guardians the opportunity to come to school, share ideas, voice concerns, talk to staff, and volunteer to work in the teacher workroom. The open policy has led to great communication and help from the community.

### ***Respect, Responsibility and Compassion...***

Life skills taught through Memorial Middle School's Teacher Advisory help to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning respect, responsibility and compassion. A peer mediation team addresses problems that arise among students, meeting whenever necessary. Students are encouraged through a variety of co-curricular activities to think globally as well as locally. Recently, students raised \$1,800 for victims of hurricane Katrina. Students have volunteered to help serve meals and clean at a local homeless shelter, offered assistance at the Salvation Army, and volunteered to clean an area of property around the school grounds. Through these experiences, students develop a sense of giving back and experience, first hand, the rewards of helping others who are less fortunate.

***Gold Star Practices – What's Working at Memorial Middle School***

- ★ *Through the Teacher Advisory program, Memorial Middle School makes clubs available to students once a week. Time is taken from the morning's TA schedule for students to participate. Each teacher chooses a club to sponsor, and students offer input as to what clubs they would like to see offered.*
- ★ *At Memorial Middle School's annual Culture Fair, sixth grade students research a country within their curriculum and develop a paper and presentation for the parent audience.*
- ★ *A Friday social brings teachers together to celebrate all successes, indulge in a hot fudge sundae, and enjoy each other's company.*

*The faculty, staff, and administration at Memorial Middle School work together with all community shareholders to determine the needs of all students and to give them what they need to be productive, successful, and happy, and ultimately to be citizens who want to give back to their community.*